

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 10533 121552Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9899

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USUN NEW YORK 5174

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AMMAN FOR USDEL SECRETARY

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: IS, US, EG, XF, OVIP(VANCE, CYRUS)

SUBJ: ISRAELI PRESS ON THE VANCE VISIT

REF: TEL AVIV 10494

1. THE PRESS TODAY CONTINUED ITS HEAVY COVERAGE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT WITH SPECULATION GENERALLY TAKING THE PLACE OF HARD NEWS. THERE WERE COMPLAINTS YESTERDAY BY REPORTERS COVERING THE EVENT (EXPRESSED PRIVATELY) THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CLOSED MEETINGS WERE UNUSUALLY TACITURN IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH THE PRESS. THE BEGIN-VANCE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS ALSO VIEWED AS NOTABLY UNREVEALING. IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH US, REPORTERS
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 10533 121552Z

HAVE ASCRIBED MUCH OF THE RETICENCE TO BEGIN'S UNWILLINGNESS TO REVEAL HIS HAND PUBLICLY AT THIS STAGE AND HIS DISINCLINATION TO REPEAT HIS STANDARD HARD LINE ON THE EVE OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE.

2. ITEMS REPORTED AS NEWS COVERAGE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT WERE SOMETIMES CONTRADICTORY. FOR EXAMPLE, BARNEA IN DAVAR MAINTAINED THAT THE VANCE PARTY WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE WIDE GAP BETWEEN

ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN POSITIONS. HE ADDED THAT BEGIN MADE IT CLEAR ISRAEL WILL NOT DISCUSS SPECIFIC ISRAELI COMMITMENTS CONCERNING THE WEST BANK AND GOLAN IN TALKS WITH THE EGYPTIANS. YEDIOT AHARANOT, HOWEVER, CLAIMED THAT THE SECRETARY AND HIS AIDES LEFT ISRAEL ENCOURAGED BY "THE TREND OF THOUGHT IN CAIRO AND JERUSALEM" AND BY THEIR INCLINATION TOWARD MAKING MUTUAL CONCESSIONS. YEDIOT SAID THE AMERICANS SEE INCREASED FLEXIBILITY IN THE GOI'S PALESTINIAN POSITION AND BELIEVE JORDAN WILL JOIN THE TALKS AT AN EARLY STAGE.

3. MUCH OF THE REPORTING WAS A REHASH OF YESTERDAY'S FRONG PAGES. SEVERAL ARTICLES, FOR EXAMPLE, REPEATED THE ASSERTION THAT THE SECRETARY'S MAIN PURPOSE IN JERUSALEM WAS TO ENCOURAGE A MORE MODERATE STAND BY ISRAEL. OTHER STORIES QUOTE US SOURCES AS INDICATING WASHINGTON'S OPPOSITION TO A SEPARATE ISRAEL-EGYPT SETTLEMENT. DAVAR REFERS TO "JERUSALEM SOURCES" AS THE BASIS OF A REPORT THAT EGYPT WILL RECEIVE LARGE QUANTITIES OF US MILITARY AND OTHER ASSISTANCE AS A DEMONSTRATION OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR SADAT'S INITIATIVE.

4. RUNNING THROUGH TODAY'S EDITORIAL COMMENT IS THE IMPRESSION, ALSO HEARD YESTERDAY, THAT THE US IS GIVING PRIORITY TO THE CAIRO CONFERENCE OVER GENEVA. SEVERAL PAPERS ALSO COMMENT THAT THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS FOR THE VANCE MISSION WILL BE THE RESPOOSE OF AMMAN AND DAMASCUS TO THE SECRETARY'S URGING TO GET ABOARD THE CAIRO TRAIN. ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING EDITORIALS

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 10533 121552Z

WAS YEDIOT'S. IT THOUGHT THE PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKABLE FOR WHAT WAS NOT SAID. AMONG THE QUESTIONS EITHER NOT ASKED OR NOT ANSWERED: WHAT WOULD ISRAEL DO IF THE PLO DID TURN UP IN CAIRO? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE WEST BANK IF ISRAEL AND EGYPT SIGNED A SEPARATE PEACE BECAUSE SYRIA AND JORDAN BOYCOTTED NEGOTIATIONS? WHAT DID UNDER SECRETARY HABIB LEARN IN MOSCOW? WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF BEGIN'S PROFESSED "OPTIMISM" IN THE FACE OF SADAT'S ASTOUNDING LACK OF COURTESY WHEN HE THREATENED THAT HIS PEOPLE WOULD RISE AGAINST BEGIN IF HE REFUSES TO RESPOND TO EGYPT'S DEMANDS?" AND FINALLY, WHY THE APPARENT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN BEGIN'S COMPLIMENTS TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND RABIN'S DESCRIPTION (FROM AN INTERVIEW IN THE FRENCH WEEKLY NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR) OF CARTER'S POLICY AS A DISASTER?

LEWIS

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